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ABSTRACT

Under Allied influence following World War II, the Japanese educational system was reorganized on a 6-3-3 basis, with the first 9 years compulsory. The lower secondary curriculum established in 1947 included many compulsory subjects--Japanese, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Music, Drawing and Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Vocational Education--leaving little time for elective subjects. At both lower and upper secondary levels, moral education has been increasingly stressed, and periodic revisions have given increasing latitude to individual schools, encouraging greater emphasis on the needs of individual students. The report says little about the content of the upper secondary curriculum, but notes the current debate--despite the fact that the proportion of students going on to upper secondary schools has increased to 94 percent--over whether upper secondary school should be compulsory. Such a move would create problems, including formation of policy with respect to the 30 percent of upper secondary students who attend private schools. Although some school policies encouraged by the postwar occupation forces have not lasted, including formation of local school districts and institution of comprehensive upper secondary schools, much has remained, including educational equality for women. (IM)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN JAPAN AFTER WORLD WAR II

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N O T E

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Part I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Establishment of the Lower Secondary School System

One of the characteristics of the post-war school system reform in Japan was the reorganization of lower secondary school education and extension of the length of compulsory education. In the complicated pre-war school system, the six-year ordinary elementary school was followed by middle schools, technical schools such as agricultural, industrial, and commercial schools, higher elementary schools and youth schools. Some of these schools were dead ends from the standpoint of advancing to higher education institutions, and if equality of opportunity in education was to be achieved, it was necessary for reforms to be made. In addition, in the discussions on the improvement of the school system the extension of compulsory education had been a frequent subject of debates, and the 1941 National School Order included a regulation extending it by two years with implementation scheduled for 1944. Due to the war, however, this reform was not carried out.

Soon after the war, various measures to democratize Japan and to build a peace-loving nation were undertaken and educational reform was regarded as the key factor in the reconstruction of Japan. In March 1947, the Basic Law of Education and the School Education Law were promulgated providing for the extension of compulsory education from six to nine years and the establishment of lower secondary schools as the educational institution for the last three years of compulsory education.

In the first year, 1947, only first year pupils were enrolled in the new compulsory lower secondary schools, and by 1949 pupils were enrolled in all three years of lower secondary schools. At the time of establishment, however, there was a serious lack of facilities, teachers, equipment, and teaching materials and aids caused by the post-war turmoil. In particular there was a serious lack of buildings and classrooms; only 15% of the lower secondary schools were able to obtain their own facilities by using old, war-damaged higher elementary school buildings. Even in 1949, double and triple class shifts were used in 2,268 classrooms; partitioned auditoriums and gymnasiums were used by 3,342 classes; halls, entrances, storage rooms, etc., were used to provide 3,090 classrooms, and irregularities in classes and shortages of accommodation could be observed throughout the country. Only 81% of the teachers needed could be found, and many of them were unqualified.

At that time, the enrollment ratio at lower secondary schools was much lower than that of elementary schools, and on the whole the enrollment ratio in rural areas was lower than that in cities. Furthermore, in both rural and city areas, the enrollment ratio for girls was low. This was due to the fact that there had been few girls who advanced to the higher elementary schools in rural areas.

Post-war lower secondary school education started under these severe conditions, but national and local efforts resulted in the gradual improvement of lower secondary schools. Within a few years these schools became stable institutions of secondary education. The fact that this reform was carried out and completed in a few years in Japan in its exhausted and impoverished post-war condition seems to be a result of the energy inherent in the modern education system after the post-Meiji restoration and is a reflection of the extraordinary enthusiasm and efforts of the Japanese people with regard to education. For reference, the recollections of the then Vice Minister of Education, Science and Culture are presented in the following quotation.

> "The reform of school system extending compulsory education to nine years and establishing the 6-3-3 system is comparable to the epoch-making school reforms in the Meiji period. In particular, the construction of schools needed after the devastation of the war and those needed for the future was, in terms of both quantity and speed, unprecedented in the entire history of Japan. The greater part of the burden of this construction was borne by local cities, towns, and villages which had suffered heavy damage during the war. The pains and efforts of local officials in selecting and obtaining land, arranging to meet the necessary construction expenses, and completing it satisfactorily, defy words. Of course, the National Government made great efforts to respond to the demands of the people, but the poverty of the national treasury made it impossible to satisfy the needs of local cities, towns, and villages. In spite of the lack of financial aid from the National Government, however, local people promoted the improvement of schools by donating land, clearing and leveling plots of land, and putting up with high taxes and demands for monetary contributions. During this period, there occurred many difficulties and sad events which will go down as unprecedented in the history of education and administration, but the fruit of all these efforts was the construction of a large number of excellent schools."

Curriculum Development in Lower Secondary School

The subjects taught in the new lower secondary schools were

divided into compulsory and elective subjects by the 1947 School Education Law Enforcement Regulations. The standard compulsory subjects were Japanese, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Music, Drawing and Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Vocational Education, and the standard elective subjects were Foreign Languages, Calligraphy, Vocational Education, and Individual Study. In addition, the overall and subject-based Courses of Study were produced and published by the Ministry to provide standards for the curriculum, content, and ways of handling each subject.

Important points to note about these standards include the following: (1) provision was made for compulsory and elective subjects, (2) the subject Social Studies was created, (3) Vocational Education was made a compulsory subject, and (4) Individual Study was included in the curriculum. Elective subjects were established in order to provide for the consideration of individual pupils' needs, school needs, and the needs of the locality. However, the number of hours devoted to compulsory subject teaching was so large that there was actually little room for the consideration of the individual and future needs of pupils.

Social Studies had combined morals (shushin), civics (komin), geography and history into a single subject and was acclaimed as the core of the new curriculum in educating pupils for democracy.

The 1947 Course of Study was prepared hastily in order to meet the deadline for the enforcement of the new school system, and as a result there were points which did not correspond to the actual situation in Japanese schools. In May 1949, therefore, the then Director-General of the School Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education issued instructions to make partial changes in the Course of Study. For purpose of unification the term "school curriculum" (kyoikukatei) was newly introduced in place of "the subjects for teaching" (kyokakatei) which had been used previously. As a result, physical education was combined with health instruction to make the new subject Health and Physical Education. Vocational Education, in which one or two courses from among agriculture, commerce, fisheries, manufacturing, and homemaking had been required, was reorganized as Vocational Education and Homemaking, which included 12 courses such as plant raising, food processing, handicrafts, managerial book-keeping, and cooking, so that this subject would be more closely related to the needs of everyday life. Also, Individual Study was eliminated and the new subject area, Special Educational Activities, was established to provide for the organization of spontaneous, extra-curricular pupils activities, which were included in education as an important area along with the study of formal subjects.

In 1951, the Course of Study was completely revised and reorganized. Particularly with regard to moral education, emphasis

was placed on the development of moral attitudes desirable in a democratic society, and efforts were required to enhance the moral development of pupils and the development of their ability to make judgments and conduct themselves independently. For these purposes, a thorough educational plan was to be developed and carried out in each school so that every opportunity that arose during the teaching of Social Studies and other subjects and in Special Educational Activities would be used for such development. However, since there were many arguments and conflicting opinions concerning moral education at school, the Ministry of Education requested the Curriculum Council to study the matter and submit its proposals. In May 1951, on the basis of the Council's recommendations, the Ministry made public its policy on moral education in the "Guidelines for Moral Education."

This is a brief outline of the development of the school curriculum standards for lower secondary schools which were more or less fully established by 1955. After that, overall revisions of the Course of Study were made in 1958, 1969, and 1977, respectively, in order to meet the changes in educational needs and those of society at these times. The main policy changes in these revisions are briefly presented below.

1958 Revision

(1) Special teaching time for moral education was established and provision was made for thoroughgoing moral education.

(2) In order to increase the enrichment of basic scholastic ability, the content of elementary school Japanese and Arithmetic was re-examined and provision was made to improve it and increase the amount of time devoted to teaching in these subjects. Overall provision was also made for improving the basic scholastic ability of the pupils in lower secondary schools.

(3) In order to improve education in science and technology, the content of Science and Mathematics was enriched and the amount of time devoted to them was increased at the lower secondary school level, and the new subject, Industrial Arts and Homemaking, was established.

(4) Geography and history courses in Social Studies were revised and enriched.

(5) Instruction concerning personal mental development, physical health, and safety was enriched.

(6) The number of electives was greatly increased in lower secondary schools so that adequate education could be provided

in accordance with the individual interests, needs and future careers of pupils.

(7) With regard to the content of elementary and lower secondary school education, measures were taken to provide for overall continuity in compulsory education.

(8) The goals and content of each subject were carefully considered with a view to increasing emphasis on basic essentials.

(9) Minimum teaching time standards were indicated in order to ensure the maintenance of compulsory education standards.

1969 Revision

(1) The curriculum was organized to provide for balance and uniformity from the standpoint of desirable human development.

(2) The teaching content was examined and intensified in terms of basic points.

(3) Provisions were made for giving special consideration to pupils who were either advanced or behind in their studies, so that thoroughgoing teaching could be provided according to the ability and aptitude of individual pupils.

(4) The expression used to designate the allotment of teaching time was changed from "minimum hours" to "standard hours" so that teaching time could be handled in a more flexible manner.

(5) "Special Educational Activities" and "School Events" were combined and "Special Activities" was newly established.

(6) In consideration of the rapid pace of progress in science and technology, new content was added to the subjects Science and Mathematics, thereby "modernizing" them.

(7) A section on Physical Education was added to the General Considerations part of the Course of Study, and physical education was strengthened by requiring such education to be provided in all aspects of school activities.

1977 Revision

(1) Moral and physical education were given greater emphasis in order to ensure the development of pupils with greater balance among intellectual, moral, and physical qualities.

(2) Educational content was carefully examined and arranged to promote the development of creative ability and ensure that the basic essentials of each subject could be mastered.

(3) In order to make school life more flexible and substantial, the number of standard teaching hours for each subject was reduced so that it would be possible for each school to make creative adjustments in line with local and individual school conditions.

(4) The goals and content for each subject were limited to core considerations, so that the teacher could use his own spontaneous ingenuity in the promotion of teaching and learning.

Objectives of Secondary Schools

According to the School Education Law, "Lower secondary schools shall have the purpose of providing ordinary lower secondary education based on the foundation laid in elementary school and according to the physical and mental development of the pupils," and "Upper secondary schools shall have the purpose of providing ordinary upper secondary education and professional education based on the foundation laid in lower-secondary school and according to the physical and mental development of the pupils." In order to realize these purposes, lower and upper secondary schools must make efforts to achieve the following objectives.

1) Objectives of Lower Secondary Schools

(1) To further attain the objectives of elementary education and develop the qualities necessary for citizens to respond to national and social needs;

(2) To develop the basic knowledge and skills for an occupation needed by society, attitudes of respect for labor, and the ability to choose a future career according to one's personal characteristics; and

(3) To promote social activities within and outside school, correctly guide the development of feelings toward such activities, and develop the ability to make fair judgments.

2) Objectives of Upper Secondary Schools

(1) To further expand and develop the attainments of lower secondary school education and develop the qualities necessary for citizens to respond to national and social needs;

(2) To develop professional skills, increase general knowledge, and provide for the determination of a career according to

one's personal characteristics and with an adequate realization of social duties and responsibilities; and

(3) To develop a broad, deep understanding of and a healthy ability to criticize society, and make efforts to strengthen personal individuality.

As far as the provision of school education under the present system is concerned, it is necessary to reaffirm the above-mentioned objectives, provide for an understanding of what they call for, and renew efforts to achieve them in actuality. As can be understood from the above stipulations, lower and upper secondary schools each clearly have their own unique character, and lower secondary school is the final stage of compulsory education.

Today, however, approximately 95% of lower secondary school graduates go on to upper secondary school. Thus lower secondary school, like elementary school, must not only meet the requirements of compulsory education, but also ensure a close coordination with upper secondary school. It is felt that one of the difficulties faced in lower secondary school education stems from the fact that this "double nature" of lower secondary schools must be realized in a well-balanced manner.

The increase in upper secondary school attendance has made it much more necessary to increase the coordination between lower and upper secondary school education, but it is too shortsighted merely to view lower secondary school as a preparation for the upper secondary school entrance examination. The focus of the problems should be on what kind of human beings we intend to bring up the pupils to be and on what kind of school curriculum is to be used for this purpose. With this in view, a major revision of the lower and upper secondary school curriculum standards was carried out in 1977.

Part II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Establishment of the Upper Secondary School System and the Three Principles

The system of upper secondary schools was newly started after World War II by the School Education Law, which was enacted in 1947, and the schools were established simultaneously throughout the country in 1948. The aim of upper secondary schools is to give higher general as well as professional education on the basis of education conducted in the lower secondary school, to young people of 15 to 18 years of age in accordance with their physical and mental development. In establishing upper secondary schools, it was government policy to reorganize what were known as Middle Schools under the old school system into new Upper Secondary Schools. The new schools, therefore, were established on a nationwide basis without great confusion.

Three basic principles were striven for at the time of the establishment of the upper secondary school system. First, a school district system should be newly introduced. Second, upper secondary schools should be organized comprehensively, with both general and vocational courses in one and the same school. Third, the school should be co-educational. These principles, which were mainly the characteristics of the high school system of the U.S.A., were strongly recommended for adoption in Japan by the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Allied Forces. As time went on, however, these principles were partly discarded or changed in substance. This is mainly because these principles did not conform to the Japanese educational climate in those days.

The school district system recommended for adoption by GHQ of the Allied Forces was different from the school attendance district system which was in operation in Japan. The recommended school district system envisaged a school district as a public authority which established and maintained schools. This system was popular in the administration of education in the U.S.A. GHQ requested the Japanese government to form school districts along these lines. The recommended system was, however, strongly opposed by the Japanese authorities as the system was felt to be alien to Japan. As a result of this, a compromise was reached, and the school district system was metamorphosed here in Japan into an attendance district system. In the early days, there were several prefectures which, relying on the idea of the community school of the U.S.A., adopted a small school attendance district system, namely, one school in one school district.

Over the years, however, school districts tended to grow larger in size and the small school district system has gradually been phased away and is now used by Kyoto Prefecture only. The weakness of the small school district system lies in the fact that it restricts the freedom of the inhabitants for school selection within narrow limits. Requests by the inhabitants for a wider choice of upper secondary school, which is a non-compulsory school here in Japan, grew so strong that a number of prefectures gradually enlarged the size of a school district.

Likewise, the idea of a comprehensive upper secondary school declined in the course of time. In the U.S.A., high schools were established as community schools covering a sparsely polulated area. Therefore, it seems that high schools in the U.S.A. tend to be comprehensive as an inevitable consequence. It may have been unreal from the very beginning of the school reform to think of introducing this American comprehensive high school system into a densely populated country like Japan.

The extent of the introduction of a comprehensive upper secondary school was very different among the prefectures, depending on the degree of direction by the regional occupation forces responsible for supervising prefectural governments. The comprehensive upper secondary school was criticized for difficulties of school management and for its incompleteness in terms of vocational education. The dissatisfaction and criticism grew stronger and stronger and the number of comprehensive upper secondary schools gradually decreased.

The introduction of the co-educational system shows a somewhat different picture from the above-mentioned two cases. The Fundamental Law of Education makes a passive statement on this matter as follows: "Co-education shall be recognized in education." (Article V) Also a Ministry of Education notification addressed to local authorities reads as follows: "The introduction of co-education system is not necessarily to be enforced." The extent of the implementation of a co-educational system was, as was the case with comprehensive schools, very different among the prefectures, depending upon the directives of the regional occupation forces responsible for supervising prefectural governments. In general, the system was more widely introduced and implemented in western Japan than in north-eastern Japan. Of all the three principles recommended for adoption by the Allied Forces in the field of upper secondary education, the co-educational system, contrary to the school district and the comprehensive school, can be said to have been introduced without meeting strong resistance against its introduction from the inhabitants, and has been well integrated into the Japanese education system.

Dissemination of Upper Secondary Education

In the course of time, upper secondary education became remarkably widespread, keeping in step with subsequent Japanese economic developments. The ratio of the pupils who went on to upper secondary school started at around 40% of lower secondary school leavers, mounted to 60% in 1960, more than 70% in 1965, and reaching 80% in 1970. Today it amounts to 94%.

It is not possible to discuss properly the problems of Japanese upper secondary education without considering this very rapid increase in the ratio of pupils progressing from lower secondary to upper secondary school. In accordance with the increase in the ratio of the pupils proceeding to upper secondary school, there was also an increase in the variety of the pupils in terms of their ability, aptitudes, future careers and interests. The advent of increased variety among the pupils raised questions such as what upper secondary education should be and what the fundamental characteristics of an upper secondary school should be.

Arguments regarding the fundamental characteristics of an upper secondary school may be divided broadly into two. One is that only those qualified pupils whose ability is above a certain level should be admitted to the school (Admission Policy Open Only to Qualified Pupils). The other is that those who wish to enter are to be admitted irrespective of their level of ability (Admission Policy Open to All Wishing to Enter). The policy of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in this regard was that as many applicants as possible should be allowed to enter school with due attention being paid to the arguments of the "Admission Policy Open Only to Qualified Pupils." This policy of the Ministry found expression in one of the regulations of the time. The regulation said that an entrance examination to upper secondary school should be conducted only when the number of applicants exceed the fixed number for new entrants.

In the years when the ratio of the pupils proceeding to upper secondary school was about 50% or 60% of the age group, the problems of upper secondary education were not so serious. As the ratio exceeded 70%, however, a great variety of pupils, far beyond what had been imagined in terms of upper secondary pupils, began to enter school and the issues of upper secondary school in terms of its role and function were raised afresh in public. Especially, children born during the period of a baby boom after the war began to swarm from 1963 to 1965 into upper secondary schools all over the country. In addition, a movement, called a "Zen-nyu" movement, calling for the admission of all the applicants to public upper secondary schools, gained power during this period, and the question of the identity of the upper secondary school was once again ventilated.

In the face of this situation, the Ministry amended the regulation

concerned in 1963 so that by the amendment the Boards of Education were given competency to conduct entrance examinations to public upper secondary schools, regardless of whether or not the number of applicants was in excess of the fixed number of the places. Alsc the Ministry issued a circular, which says "In view of the aims of upper secondary schools it is not adequate for the Boards of Education to admit to upper secondary school those persons who are judged to be unable to study due to mental or physical difficulties or those who seem to be unable to complete upper secondary school curricula." This circular from the Ministry showed that it more or less supported the "Admission Policy Open Only to Qualified Pupils." At the same time, however, the Ministry gave thoughtful consideration to the "Admission Policy Open to All Wishing to Enter" by stating in the same circular that "In view of the dissemination of upper secondary education and the principle of equal educational opportunity it is desirable that as many candidates as possible should be allowed to enter school."

In the course of time, educational administrative measures were taken by each Prefectural Board of Education as the body responsible for establishing public upper secondary schools to increase the number of schools so as to admit as many applicants as possible, although the entrance examination has been a prerequisite for admission; this has resulted in the present high ratio of pupils proceeding from lower secondary to upper secondary school.

At present, the actual ratio of all applicants to those who actually entered school is 98.4% on a nationwide average. This figure shows that almost all the applicants have entered some school or other, leaving aside the issue of their liking or disliking specific schools. Seen from the macroscopic point of view, therefore, the situation regarding entrance to upper secondary school is closest to the situation where everyone wishing to enter is admitted.

Compulsory Attendance - A Problematic Issue

On the basis of the existing ratio of 94% of the age group proceeding to upper secondary schools, an argument is often heard to the effect that we have reached the stage of making upper secondary education compulsory for all. But this assertion contains several problems.

First, from the educational point of view, it is disputable whether or not a universal attendance obligation should be imposed upon the youth of this age range in which ability, aptitudes, aspirations regarding a future career, etc., are widely differentiated. Even today when the ratio of the pupils from lower secondary to upper secondary school has remarkably increased, there are still

those who wish to take courses other than those offered in upper secondary schools. It would be questionable whether such young people would be happy by being forced to receive upper secondary education.

Also from the view point of administration and finance, the assertion is problematical. It is anticipated that during the time span of ten years from now the number of pupils will increase by about one million due to a natural population increase caused by the arrival of the second baby boom. There may, therefore, be difficulty in maintaining the present ratio of the pupils proceeding from lower secondary to upper secondary school, especially in the cities and urban areas where the population is increasing rapidly.

Once upper secondary education were to become compulsory, the education administration authorities would be requested to be ready to meet public demand for entrance to upper secondary school. If parents of pupils requested admission to public schools, they should be admitted to them. At present the private upper secondary schools share 30% of the total enrollment at upper secondary level. Therefore, it would be a heavy financial burden for the education administration authorities to admit to public schools all the pupils now at private institutions. In this regard, deliberations might lead to the fundamental problem of how existing private upper secondary schools, each of which has a unique tradition of independence and management, should be dealt with.

The Central Council for Education, an advisory organ to the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, has deliberated twice on the issue of upper secondary school in terms of attendance being made compulsory. The Council put forth a proposal in a report submitted in 1974 as follows:

> "At the upper secondary education stage efforts should be made, instead of imposing universal compulsory attendance, to assure various educational opportunities as well as to realize to the full the aims of education expected at this stage, by providing various services for school attendance."

The proposal showed the negative attitude of the Council towards compulsory attendance at that time.

Upper Secondary Education in Future

There are a lot of problems regarding the form upper secondary education should take in the coming years, in addition to the problem of compulsory attendance.

Some of the problems are:

1) What the content of education is to be at upper secondary

school given that it has grown to be the educational institution for the mass of young people attended by almost all those between 15 and 18 years of age.

2) How the part-time courses and correspondence courses, both for working youth, at upper secondary school levels are to be improved.

3) What form vocational education should take against the background of the pupils' concentration on academic courses in accordance with the increase in the number of pupils wishing to enter colleges and universities.

4) What measures should be taken to meet the request for the increase in new upper secondary schools, especially in cities and urban areas where there is a large population increase.

5) What guidance should be given to those pupils who are not fully motivated to study or who have committed acts of juvenile delinquency. The number of such pupils has increased in proportion to the increase in the enrollment ratio.

These are some of the difficult problems that Japanese upper secondary education is confronting.

Recently the criteria relating to the upper secondary school curriculum were extensively revised; the four fundamental principles of the revision are as follows:

1) More regard should be paid to special features of individual schools so that each school may be in a position to develop its own school characteristics.

2) Schools should provide education in accordance with the personality and ability of individual pupils.

3) School should provide the pupils with an environment in which they can partake in a comfortable and full school life.

4) Schools should provide the pupils with the opportunity of understanding the satisfaction of work experience, and should attach importance to moral as well as physical training.

This revision of the curriculum is one of the counter-measures designed to cope with the problems of upper secondary education; further measures should be taken in future so that upper secondary education may continue to be improved.